... MELISSA MAYO'S SPECIAL PROVIDENCE...

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CHAPTER I



HILANDER BAXTER sat his private office reading a letter which he had just received in the morning mail. Philander's private office was almost as narrow as his mind, and was devoted to the same purpose, the calculation of interest and the figuring of '62, reposed on the top of the desk, and his cowhide-shod feet were elevated to a position beside it. The letter he was poring over was written and read as follows;

"Lear Uncle: - Sayder them affidavits you got from Dec. Bailey and the rest. quotation. How you got 'em I don't see Snyder says that Lipha-How you got 'em I don't see ht to enlighten Miss Busteed, the lady let's only servin' for three months in the war and then reel glad ter sec yer. Walk right inter the dinin'- fair to be "beat" for the term of her natural life. not dyin' for ten year afterwards makes it hard to prove that he got his rheumatism in the army, but he thinks the affidavits will fix it all right. Snyder's a keen one and pretty level-headed, so I guess it will do to bank There's so much back pension due now that if the claim goes through, Melissy 'Il bave a good-sized wad. What are you up to, anyway? I know you ain't in it

for your health. Why don't you give a fellow a tip? ANTY." Thisander read this epistle three times, puckering his even thoughtfully behind his spectacles and twisting his grizzied chin beard into a point. Anty Taylor-the nickname being a contraction of Anthony-was a nephew after his own heart. He had early discerned symptoms

in getting him the position he held in the Boston attorneys' office. But, Anthony being a prospective heir, He pendered over the letter for some time, philosoplizing perhaps on the efficacy of a note of hand in

squeezing athdavits out of unwilling physicians, and then, removing both feet and hat from the desk, stood

the lox hedges up the path that led to Melissa Mayo's "Yes, Mr. Baxter?" inquiringly, front door. When he reached the turn that led around the house-only strangers and clergymen call at front place. doors in Orham-he paused a moment to look at the house and its surroundings.

Eliphalet Mayo had fallen heir to a fine estate and of the money before he in turn passed away, and his how'd you like ter be Mrs. Baxter?" widow, with the able assistance of her brother-in-law, Napoleon, had spent the rest. There was little left now but the farm itself.

But the farm was not to be sneezed at, and that was precisely what Philander was "cal'latin" as he stood field and the house and barn; that was the list as Mr. yer know," he added, as an afterthought. Baster itemized ft. A pretty good home for a man to spend his old age in, and the window was a rather pleas- expectedness of the proposal that she sat for a moment

"Hello, Nap!" he said, rather tartle, "What are you up ter this mornin'?"

"Oh, nawthin' much. I was jest wonderin' if 'twas at the antiquated desk in goin' ter be as hot's this all summer. Don't seem 's so I ever remembered a much hotter spell. Kinder dry fer vegetables, ain't it?"

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Baxter, glancing toward the garden. "Don't seem ter be too dry fer weeds. Why in time don't yer clear out that patch?"

thing er 'nother's come up, and--"

ashamed of payself!"

Mr. Mayo's dignity was touched.

"I dunno 's my settin' 'round is any of your affairs, Philander Baxter!" he observed.

"I dunno 's 'tis, either-not yet," said Mr. Baxter. Then he entered by the back perch and slammed the on paper bearing the deor, leaving the namesake of the mighty Corsican to orinted head, "Office of speculate on what the last two words of his remark sion Attorneys, Boston,' sideration, and Napoleor, sat down on the wash-bench gain in order to do it justice.

thinks the Mayo claim will go thought been for it would have been prefly shaky if it hadn't been for widow should be, being "fair, fat" and the rest of the out or the porchouse!"

Philander complied, and after helping himself to a seat in the best armehair and "hanging up his hat on anybody else but you, I should think be'd been runnin'." the floor," proceeded to business,

"Melissy." he asked, "yer ain't heard nawthin' more from that pension, have yer?"

was a tremor in the widow's voice-"yer don't s'pose Melissy?" , there's any chance of my not gittin' it-do you?"

"Well, yer can't tell. Anything fer do with gov ment rather suddenly and whistled. is mighty onsartin. However, I reakon them affidavits I got 'll fetch it through."

"Land of Goshen! I hope there won't be no hitch anywhere. I do need that money somethin' dreadful. of promise in the young man, and had been instrumental What with taxes and groc'ry hills and things like that, seem's if I should go distracted. I should never have thought of a pension if it hadn't been fer you, Mr. Bax- up fer the house just now poppin' the question himself." Mr. Baxter did not think a tip advisable under the ter. You've been so kind in all this I dunno what I can ever do ter thank yer."

Mr. Baxter waved the thanks away with the air of a philanthropist to whom such manifestations of gratitude were everyday trifles.

"Tou're welcome," he grunted. "Now-er-Melissy, upon the first and covered his baid head with the second. I come up this mornin' ter have a leetle talk with you or no ter-night." u-on-er-a matter of business, so ter speak." The widow looked a little alarmed, but she said,

"Well there's Napoleon."

"Napoleon!" scornfolly. "I mean a man with some

The widow turned red, then pale and then red again.

"Jest what I say. You've got a good place here, and you need a man ter run it. I've got some money in there. A good-sized orchard and garden, some acres of the tank and I need somebody ter make a home fer cranberry swamp, badly run to weeds and bushes, but me. Of course, yer understand I think a heap of yercapable of being made profitable; pasture land, corn- love yer better'n anything on airth, and-and all that. don't care how hard a driver a man is. Work don't

Mrs Mayo was so entirely taken aback by the un-

ness did not deign to notice him. Mr. Mayo's meditations must have been absorbing, for he had allowed his pipe to go out, something he did not do unless under severe mental strain. For some time after Mr. Baxter had gone, he sat there, scratching his chin and drawing absent-mindedly at the dead pipe. Then he got up, put on his hat and moved off toward the village. He hur-"Wa-a-l, I have be'n goin' ter fer some time, but one ried a little, too-an almost unbelievable action.

He walked on down the main street, past the post-'One thing er 'nother yer granny! I tell yer what office, past Mr. Baxter's real estate office, past Web 'tis, Nap Mayo, if this place b'longed ter me you'd have Saunder's billiard saloen, until he came to the road of percentages. His well- ter work harder 'n yer do now. Settin' round all day which led to the shore. Down this he turned and worn tall hat, of the crop and sunnin' verself like a cet. I saum if I wouldn't be stopped at a little house by the side of the road. This was where Abijah Colton lived, and Abijah himself opened the door in answer to Napoleon's knock.

All the gossip in town, beginning with Matilda Busteed and ending with Mrs. Jerry Burgess, were sorry for Abijah Celton. They all said they didn't see how Bije Colton made out ter earn a livin'. As Miss Busteed fee ingly put it:

"He's got more leetle putterin' irons in the fire, and Barnes & Snyder, Pen- might mean. It was a subject which required con- they don't none of 'em amount ter nawthin'. Leatle mite of an lyster bed here and a leetle mite of a cranb'ty bog there, and doin' a lectle bit of barrel coop'rin' this 'Mr. Paxter's knock at the back door was answered time er year and a leetle speck of scallopin' and sea thinks the Mayo claim will go through all right. He says by Mrs. Mayo herself. Melissa Mayo was all that a clambin' that three er year. Beats me how he keeps

As Abijah, being close-mouthed about his affairs, "Why, how dy'do, Mr. Baxter!" she exclaimed. "I'm didn't see fit to enlighten Miss Busteed, the lady bade

"Hello, Nap," said Aldjah, welcoming his caller, "Come in and set down. What's the matter? If twas Mr. Mayo was too full of the importance of his news

to notice the sarcasmi, "Blje Colten," he said, solemnly, "I want ter ask "No, Philander, I ain't. Yer don't s'pose"-there you santhin' important. Be you thinkin' of marryin'

Mr. Colton was surprised. He sat down in a chair

"Well, I shum, Nap!" he said, after a pause, "That's what the lawyers would call a leadin' question, ain't it? What are yer drivin' at?"

"'Cause all I've got ter say is." continued Napoleon. wagging his forefinger solemnly, "that if yer be, yer want ter brace up and ask her. Philander Baxter was "Who? Philan- Cet out!"

'Honest Lord's truth! Heard him myself. Said she was a likely woman and a worker, and that he wanted her ter he Mrs. Baxter."

"What did she say?" auxiously asked Mr. Colton. Finally decided ter think it over and write him yes

"Well, well, well! I swan ter man!" Abijah was talking to himself rather than to Napoleon, "Philander Payter! Philander-that mean, miserly old- Humph! "Yes. Fact is, Melissy, you need a man round this there must be sunthin' in this more'n there looks ter be." Then, after a pause. "Say, Nap," he asked, "what made yer s'pose I was thinkin' of marryin' Melissy?"

"Why," said Napoleon, slowly, "you be'n a-comin" hoss sense. Fact is, Mellssy, I ailers liked you. You're fer see her off and on fer four er five year new, and I some money when his father died, back in the fifties. a good, likely woman and a worker. I don't know's I kinder thought yer might be thinkin' of keepin' comp'ny. But Eliphalet had succeeded in getting rid of the most ever see a better worker 'n you be. Er-er-Melissy, Course I ain't had no experience myself, bein' a bachelor,

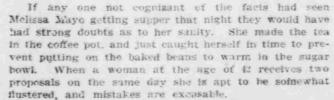
"I see, I see, Four er five year," musingly; "that "Why-why, Mr. Baxter?" she gasped, "What do does seem a long time. Mebbe I have been a leetle mite slow. Comes of my everlastin' cautiousness. I'm glad yer come down and told me, Nap. Jedge yer didn't like the idee of Philander fer a brother-in-law; he is a toler'ble hard driver." "Twan't that!" declared Mr. Mayo, reddening. "I

scare me. I jest thought yer oughter have a chance.

"Weil, I'm much obleeged ter yer. Callate I'll step up and see Melissy a minute er so. Reekon you'll excuse me. So long!"

And Mr. Celton hurried out, leaving his visitor to follow or not, as he pleased.

CHAPTER II



She had long ago given up the idea that Abijah Colton meant anything serious by his visits. He had been calling for so many years that his dropping in every now and then had come to be taken as a matter of course. Besides, Melissa shared the prevailing opinion that Abijah was on the point of going on the town, and therefore, not being able to support himself, had no intention of taking a wife. But that afternoon he had come hurrying to the back door, and, on entering the come hurrying to the back door, and, on entering the dining-room, had without preface asked her if she had ever thought of being married, and, if so, how she'd like to ship 'long with him. After this he appeared too much engaged in wondering at his own temerity to say more, and shut up like one of his own scallops.

The astounded widow, after several "Landsakes," and "I'm so fluttered I dunte what ter do's," had finally stapmered that she would like a little time to think it over, and would send an answer in writin' that aight.

Abijah, who had sat on the edge of his chair, twirling his hat and hitching uneasily, assented to this proposi-tion with alacrity, and departed forthwith, leaving the sought Melissa to wander about in a dazed state

Neither Napoleon nor his sister-in-iaw had much to say during the progress of the meal. The former ate rather nurriedly and kept glancing furtively across the table. After he had finished his third cup of tea, how-

ever, he blurted out:
"Wail, Melissy, which it'll be, Philander or 'Bije?"
The relict of the martyred Eriphalet set down her 'Napoleon Mayo! you've be'n' a-listenin'!" she ex-'Hain't, nuther!" declared Mr. Mayo, guiltily

"Yes, you have, and don't yer have the face ter deny How else did you know 'bont it—I never told yer?" "Well, I happened ter be settin' on the wash-bench "Well, I happened ter be settin on the wash-bench when Philander was here, and he beliered so loud a deef man could hear him. Besides," and Napoleon assumed an air of injured dignity, "who's get a better right ter listen? Ain't I your brother in-law, and didn't 'Liphalet say ter me, jest 'fore he died: 'Napoleon, I leave Melissy in your care, you look out ter her?' And I've done it, too; laid awake hights and planned and planned, so's you'd have a easy time. Worked myself bu'l ter death, and not a word of thanks. This is an improvement matter; yer oughter ask my advice." important matter; yer oughter ask my advice."
"Your advice! I asked your advice and took it when

"Your advice! I asked your advice and took it when I put that thousand dollars in the Bay Shore Investment Company, and where'd the advice and the thousand dollats go to? Where's the profits we was goin ter market on that other thing I took your advice about—that patent clam digger? They're in your mind, that's where they be, and that's where most of your work is done. You march your boots inter that woodshed and stay there! I don't ask advice of folks that's dishonorable enough ter listen under winders."

able enough ter listen under winders."

The discomfited Napoleon retired to the St. Helena of the woodshed, and the ruffled Mrs. Mayo cleared away the tea things with a bang. Then she sat down at the old-fashioned desk and prepared to write the letters that should carry joy or wee to two palpitating hearts.

In her rational intervals that afternoon she had the reatter over and over in her mind.

turned the matter over and over in her mind. Intion pointed one way; duty and prudence the other, tion pointed one way; duty and prudence the other. She had always liked Coiton; in fact, the gossips in town were agreed that, had Abijah mustered up courage to propose in the old days when he and Eliphalet were courting the fair Melissa, he would have won. But Abijah delayed, and Eliphalet didn't, and so the latter

courting the fair Mehssa, he would have won. But Abijah delayed, and Eliphalet didn't, and so the latter came out ahead.

At the present time the facts were these: Abijah was poor, and, so the widow reasoned, could not carry on the farm. If she should get the pension they might have enough to get along on, but it was Philander who had suggested the pension in the farst place, and who had suggested the pension in the farst place, and who had done so much to help her to get it. From her point of view it would be the worst sort of ingratitude to marry Abijah and live on money that Philander had obtained. No, it was her duty to marry Philander, and he was rich enough to keep the old home and provide for Napoleon and for her.

She had never written a letter of this kind before. She could and did write pages of news and small talk to her niece in East Boston, but this was no ordinary subject, and no ordinary letter would do it justice. She rose, and, from the shelf where it stood along with the "Lite of Captain John Smith." "Pitgrim's Progress." "The Firate's Own Book," "Gospel Hymns Number 2." and "The Home Docter," she took the "Complete Letter Writer" and opened it at the page headed, "From a Young Lady Accepting an Offer of Marriags."

The young lady in question must have been a very formal young lady, for her idea of a letter was a grand

ceeded to copy it.

BY JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

"Dear and Respected Friend -I have considered, with a heartfelt sense of responsibility and solemnity your proposal, seeking my hand and heart in marriage. I realize the importance of the decision which I am called upon to make, and am conscious of its potent effect upon my happiness in the future. But, dear friend, I realize also your sterling worth and stainless character, and feel that I may safely trust myself to your guiding care as we travel together the long pathway of life. Dear friend, I accept your proposal. Yours affectionately, "MELISSA T. MAYO."

The widow read this mournful screed over again with a becoming pride, and, placing it in an envelope, sealed the latter and addressed it to "Philander H. Baxter,

Napoleon was still scated on the wash-bench when affair, almost painfully so. No "Sweethearts" and "Aha!" sneered Philander, exultingly; "so yer see yer Philander came out of the house, but the man of busi- "Own precious darlings" for her; no, indeed But Me- 'ain't so independent, after all. You're a pauper! And lissa thought the epistle the pink of perfection and pro- yer've killed the egg that laid the golden goose, too. But den't yer flatter yerself. What d'yer s'pose I wanted ter marry yer fer? Fer yer good looks? I guess not! "I was the land and the pension I wanted. Tried ter be sarcastic, too, didn't yer? Callin' me a 'young man.' You ain't no spring chicken verself! Napoleon agrees

with yer, does he? He's another nice one; he's-" "Philander Baxter, I don't know what you're talkin" about, but I do know that the Lord's be'n good enough ter let me see what kind of a man you be. Walk out of that door this minute! Not another word! You march!" The widow's eyes snapped and her fingers twitched.

Mr. Baxter hesitated, essayed to speak, thought better of it, and-marched.

Napoleon was sitting on the wash bench. "Nice morning, Philander!" he said, cheerfully,

"You-you-you-I-" gasped the choking owner of bonds, and passed on, speechless.



"Half an hour later Melissa stood at the back door, waving a good-bye to the jubilant Mr. Colton."

Then, with a sigh, a sigh that meant the relinquish ing of a lifelory dream, she returned to the next page of the book and proceeded to copy the letter. "From a Young Lady Rejecting a Proposal of Marriage."

"Respected and Honored Friend:-I have considered "Respected and Honored Friend:—I have considered with a heartfelt sense of responsibility and solemnity your proposal seeking my hand and heart in marriage. I realize the importance of the decision which I am called upon to make, and am conscious of its potent effect upon my happiness in the future. Honored friend, I realize your sterling worth as a young man of high moral character, but I cannot but feel that the difference in our temperament and ideals makes it inadvisable for me to consent to entwine my career with yours and travel with you the long pathway of life. I feel that it is wisest for me to decline your proposal. My parents agree with me that this decision is for the best. I shall always be your friend. Yours with sincere respect. always be your friend. Yours with with sincere respect, "MELISSA T. MAYO."

the copy she hesitated, pondered, and at length substi-tuted the word. "Napoleon." Then, just as she seared this second letter in its envelope and addressed it to the luckless Abijah, the Methodist minister rang the front

door bell.

"Why, how'd vou do. Mr. Salters? I declare, what a stranger you be! Napoleon! Nap-o-le-on! Take them two letters off my desk and mail 'em down ter the postoffice right away. Yes; them two there. Walk right inter the settin'-room. Mr. Salters."

And Melissa hurried away to entertain her guest, who was making his formal round of pastoral calls.

Napoleon took the letters into the kitchen, took his hat from the nail, and stood turning the two envelopes over and over in his hand.

"Jest like her." he muttered. "Never asked my advice at all, and there can't no tellin' what's she's been and dene! I oughter see what's she writ; it's my bounden dony ter see."

Lounden day ter see."

He held the letters up to the light, but it was nearly sunset, and the paper was thick. "That woman needs a guardeen, that's what she is," he solfloquized.

He tipteed to the dining-room door and shut it carely. Then he held the two letters over the steaming nose of the tea kettle Twenty minutes later he started for the postoffice.

CHAPTER III

Melissa's spirits were not of the best the next morning, a state of mind which had its effect upon her temper and caused Napoleon to seek the quiet of the wash-beach for the most of the foreacon. To tell the truth, the widow was not looking forward to wedded life with Mr. Baxter as a dream of bliss. Philander was not the ideal bridegroom. Then, too, she could not help thinking the hormore she might have been with Abitah of how much happier she might have been with Abijah, if circumstances had been different. Foor fellow, how disappointed he would be. Melissa's only consolation was the thought that she was doing her duty and that perhaps, Philander would take her to Niagara Falls on their wedding trip. To go to Niagara Falls had been her dream ever since Eliphalet had promised to take her there and had been unable to keep his word.

there and had been unable to keep his word.

She was desting the chairs in the "settin'-room" and looking out of the window when Philander slammed the front gate and came up the walk. The accepted suitor didn't look happy; not nearly so happy as he should look under the circumstances, Meissa thought. Pefore she could get to the back door, he had opened it and stamped into the dining-room.

"Good-mernin' Philander" said Malters bireton. "Good-mornin', Philander." said Melissa, blushing be-

You-you." sputtered Mr. Baxter, whose face

"You-you-you!" sputtered Mr. Baxter, whose face was the color of a danger signal.

"Why, what's the matter?" began the widow, but Philander interrupted her.

"You-you pauper, you!" he shouted, shaking his fist, in which two envelopes, one brown and one white, were clutched: "you mis rable pauper, you!"

"Philander Baxter, what do you-"

"Don't yer talk ter me! Don't yer do it! Thought because you was goin' ter git the pension money yer didn't need me, hey? Do yer reclize who I be? I'm the richest man in this town, that's who I be. I've got money in the bank, I have! Yes, and I own bonds. And—and—who are you? That's what I ask! Who are you?"

you?"

The bewildered Melissa tried to interrupt once more, but Mr. Baxter would not allow it.

"Who are you? What have you got? Not a red cent! That's what yer've got! And you think yer've got a pension comin', don't yer? Well, yer ain't! Read that!"

Automatically, Melissa took the brown envelop Philander's fingers. It enclosed a telegram to Mr. BaxMr. Mayo said nothing, but his shoulders shook.

Melissa returned to the dining-room, sat down in the rocking chair, read the telegram again, and began to cry.

Her wrath and mordification at Philander's insults were keen, but they were forgotten in the crowning disappointment of the rejection of the pension claim. The farm would have to be soid, for she had not money enough to pay the taxes. What would become of them? What

to pay the taxes. What would become of them? What should she do?
"Melissy" called Napoleon, "Bije is comin'."
The willow sprang to her feet, hurriedly wiped her eyes and bravely greefed Mr. Colton as he came up the back steps. If Philander had looked too gloomy for a rejected lover, certainly Abijah looked too happy for a rejected one. He was dressed in a new suit of clothes, too, which the widow, even in the reldst of her grief and excitement did not fall to rotter.

too, which the widow even in the excitement, did not fail to notice.

"Well, Meissy!" exclaimed Abijah, beaming like the sun in August, "here I be, wer see!" see you be, Abijah." efammered the lady, "I-I see you be, Abijah." "Yes," stammered the lady, "I-1 see you be, Abijah."
"Yer see I be! Well! is that all yer've got ter say ter
me this mernin' of all mornin's? Why, I've got a heap ter say ter you, my dear!"

At this fond appellation Mrs. Mayo looked up in

astenishment, and Abijah saw her swollen eyelids.
"Melissy Mayo!" he exclaimed, "you've been cryin'."
"No. I ain't-that is, I-" "Melissy, you're too good a Methodist ter tell yarns like that. Now what's the matter? By thunder! I know. It's that mis'rable Philander Baxter! I see him comin' down the street here lookin' like he was crazy mad. You sent him packin' and he come up here and made you cry. Well, darnn him, I'll-"

"Athiele Colton, What did you jest any far a chort

you cry. Well, dann him, I h-"Adjah Colton! What did you jest say fer me about hein's Methodist?"

"That's so, Well, I'll see Philander later, Now, Mellssy, what's the trouble? Out with it."

Mellssa could keep the secret no longer.

"Oh, 'Bijah!" she sobbed: "I've lost my pension. The

"Wouldn't cry! Why, what am I goin' ter live on? How can I run the farm? "Why, I recken I'm goin' ter look out fer that, ain't 1? When a man marries a woman he gin'rally cal'lates ter support her, and now that you've said yer'd marry

"Said I'd marry you? Why, what do you mean "See here, Melissy, am I crazy or are you? Didn't write this letter?"

Melissy took the proffered theet of paper and un Melissy took the preferred theet of paper and unfolded it. It was the letter "from a Young Lady Accepting a Preposal of Marriage." Philander's references to Napoleon and the "young man" were plain enough now. He had received the other letter. She must have put the letters in the wrong envelopes.

"Didn't you write that letter. Melissy?"

"Why, why, yes, Abijah, I wrote it; but—"

"Thank the Lord! I begun-ter be afeard that some-body had put up a job on me. Well, then, what's the matter?"

But, Abijah, we can't be married How could you

run this great farm and support Napoleon and me, when you're so poor?"

Mr. Colton slapped his knee and roared with delight. "Ho! ho!" he laughed: "that's where the shoe pinches, is it? Well. Melissy, mebbe I sin't so starvation poor, after all I know Matildy Busteed says I am, but Matildy Busteed says I am business of every. don't know more'n nine-tenths of the business of every-body on this earth. I've done fairly well this season and last. I own a share in Si Hardin's mack'rel schooner, last. I own a share in Si Hardin's mack'rel schooner, and she brought me in a few hundred last year, and my cranb'ry bog paid me four hundred more, and my coop'rin' trade's wuth some more, and I put a little cash inter a 'ry goods bus'ness in Kyannis three years ago, and that's doin' well, and—"

"Why. Abljah; you must have money in the bank!"

"Ya-as, somewheres round three thousand last time I carllated it. Then I've got a leetle railroad stock and come gov'ments—jest a few—"

"Great land of Goshen!"

"So, I callate we'll be able ter scratch along without callin' on the neighbors. But, Melissy, if you ain't goin' ter marry me I'm li'ble ter be stuck with some Niagry Falls tickets, 'cause I erdered some up ter the depot as a state of the stuck with some time. I come along, riggerin' that we'd be married some time next week and go up there on our weddin' trip."

"Ch, Abijah!"

"Why, good land! you ain't cryin' again?"
"Oh, not reely, Abijah; I was only thickin' that God
had been awid good ter me ter-day."

Half an hour later Melissa stood at the back door, waving a good-bye to the jubilant Mr. Colton. She was smilingly happy, but her face still were a slightly puzcled expression.

"I don't see," she said, aloud, "how I come for mix m letters up. I thought I was so very careful with . Seem's if there must have been a special Providence. in it, some way."

Napoleon, still enthroned on the wash-bench, blew a thick cloud of smoke from his lips and smiled blandly, at the sky.



"Then he held the two letters over the steaming nose of the teakettle."

in person to spend it with. oney to put the place into shape again, but there persion. Mr. Baxter snapped his square jaws as one who comes to a decision, and passed on back to be supposed to a decision, and passed on

eco Mayo was sitting on the wash-bench be-e open window of the dining-room, meditating, smoked. Napoleon was a firm believer in the meditation and smoke. Of the value of manual meditation and smoke. Of the value of manual owever, he was by no means so certain. His on this particular forenoon were a trifle vague, it principally with the ideas that it was a hot the files were somewhat troublesome, and that sleepy. The facts that the weeds in the garden feet blick and that his sizer had begged him.

feet high, and that his sister had begged him them out did not disturb him. In the least.

Ir. Eaxter came around the corner of the house a avoke with a start from his tobacco tranca b. Philander! How be yer?" he said, rising and Baxter snorted. Napoleon was the one item on one side of his mental ledger in the calculation

or two speechless, trying to get her thoughts into some sort of order. "Well, what d' yer say?" inquired the ardent suitor, Then the widow said what others have said before,

though not always with so much reason:
"Fut this—is—is so sudden, Mr. Baxter!" she stam-The suddenness of it had not struck Philander before,

The suddenness of it had not struck Philander before, but he was willing to allow anything in reason.

"Well, I dunno but 'tis," he said. "Tell yer what I'll do, Melissy. S'pose yer think it over till ter-morrer or ter-night and then drop me a line. How'll that do?" Still trembling. Melissa agreed to this arrangement, and Mr. Baxter got up to go.

"I gin'rally like ter scitle anything up right off when I make up my mind ter do it." he said, with his hand an the latch, "but I s'pose 'twas sorter sudden fer yer. However, yer can write me ter-night. Good-mornin'; I'm goin' ter have that cranb'sy bog cleaned up fust thing." The last remark showed that Mr. Baxter considered

"The Mayo pension claim turned down by the govern-ment. Your affidavits wan't hefty enough.
"ANTY TAYLOR."